

Promoting Religious Freedom During the Campaign Against Terrorism": Chair Michael Young Opening Remarks

November 27, 2001 CHAIRMAN YOUNG: Good morning. We'd like to commence these hearings this morning on promoting religious freedom around the world during the campaign on terrorism. We welcome you to these hearings, delighted you're able to be with us. Allow me to start, if I may, by first welcoming Dr. Halperin, who's with us. We're delighted to have you here. Under Secretary Dobriansky will be with us shortly. We understand traffic from the State Department is worse than anticipated, and she'll be with us very shortly. But allow me to start with just a few opening remarks if I may. The world has changed dramatically since the atrocities of September 11th. No one doubts that. We all understand that. At the same time Americans have not changed, and particularly our American values haven't changed. We still have the same passionate dedication to liberty, to democracy, to human rights, and among those, and one of the most fundamental, and certainly one of our founding principles, is the principle of religious freedom. This Commission supports President Bush in his war against terrorism. We condemn utterly the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11th, and mourn the terrible loss of life that day. We also support the U.S. Government's strong commitment to respond. The Commission stands with our country and the world in fighting terrorism. The Commission is at the same time concerned that in forging alliances against terrorism, the United States not compromise its commitment to democracy and human rights including religious freedom. We oppose such policy tradeoffs. If we abandon our values to fight this battle, the terrorists will already have won. The best way to assure the ultimate defeat of evil is to continue to champion the good and not give that evil a foothold in our hearts or in our souls, and the United States is capable of fighting a two-front war. It can fight against terrorism and for human rights at the same time. However, we believe they really are one and the same. Human rights, including religious freedom, are not marginal concerns to be tossed aside in the battle for world security. Rather they are central to that battle, because as governments reduce their oppression of their own people, the seeds of terrorism will not take root. We want to assure that all our foreign policy makers understand that religious freedom can itself be an important, indeed central tool, in the campaign against terrorism. The United States has sought cooperation in the war against terrorism from several governments that are among the world's most egregious violators of religious freedom and other human rights. Some of these countries have been designated by the U.S. Government as countries of particular concern as the statute provides for their religious freedom violations, or had been recommended for that status by this Commission. Some of the countries are themselves on the list of states that sponsor international terrorism. As United States works with these governments it should make clear that their current cooperation does not mean that the United States will lose interest in the conditions of human rights in their countries. Cooperation in the fight against terrorism does not grant them license to continue to abuse the rights of their own people. There should be no free ride. We'll be more effective in our efforts to eradicate terrorism, moreover, if we insist that our partners eradicate the violations of human dignity that are themselves a threat to peace, justice, democracy and the rule of law, vital components to necessary to global security and stability. In this hearing we seek to determine how foreign policy and how the making of foreign policy has changed in the aftermath of September 11th. In particular we will explore how these changes may have affected the willingness and ability of the United States to promote human rights including religious freedom, especially in countries cooperating in the campaign against terrorism. On the other side of the equation we are asking whether the war on terrorism, in which the U.S. increasingly engages and assists cooperating countries, has opened up more opportunities to improve their human rights conditions and their performance. The Commission also is interested in learning how best to use the promotion of religious freedom as a tool in the campaign against terrorism. We will have the privilege of hearing from three panels today. The first will provide an overview of administration foreign policy and practice as it affects the promotion of religious freedom during the conflict against terrorism. The second will look at specific countries and regions where both terrorism and religious freedom violations seem to go hand in hand. And the third panel will examine the various policy tools that can make a difference, not just in the war on terrorism, but also in the reduction of violations of religious freedom. The Commission has urged the President continue to demonstrate America's commitment to defend and promote religious freedom while protecting us and the rest of the world from those who are consumed by hatred in the pursuit of power. This hearing will tell us how. With these thoughts in mind, I would like to introduce my colleagues on the Commission and then get started with the first panel. In fact, what I think I'll do is ask each of my fellow commissioners if they would introduce themselves. COMMISSIONER MURPHY: I'm Bishop William Murphy. I'm the Bishop of Rockville Centre in Long Island. I have been a commissioner now since about three or four months. COMMISSIONER TAHIR-KHELLI: I'm Shirin Tahir-Kheli, head of the South Asia Program at Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, one of the newer members appointed by the President this July. COMMISSIONER KAZEMZADEH: I am Firuz Kazemzadeh, Professor Emeritus at Yale, and Senior Advisor to the National Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States. COMMISSIONER GAER: I'm Felice Gaer. I direct the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights at the American Jewish Committee, and I was appointed by Congressman Gephardt. COMMISSIONER STITH: Charles Stith, the Director of the African Presidential Archives and Research Center at Boston University. COMMISSIONER SHEA: I'm Nina Shea, Director of the Center for Religious Freedom at Freedom House, and this is my second term on the Commission. I was appointed by Speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert. CHAIRMAN YOUNG: Thank you. And to my right sits Steve McFarland, who is the Executive Director of our Commission, and has been since its inception. Allow me to introduce our first two panelists today. We have with us, who was originally scheduled to be our second panelist, but may turn out to be our first, Dr. Morton Halperin, who's currently a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations where he directs its Democracy Center. Dr. Halperin served in the

Nixon and Johnson Administrations, and most recently in the Clinton Administration as the Director of the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department. We will be shortly joined by a second panelist, Paula Dobriansky, who was sworn in as Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs on May 1st of this year. In that position she is responsible for a variety of foreign policy issues, including democracy, human rights and labor. Prior to her appointment she was Senior Vice President and Director of the Washington Office of the Council on Foreign Relations. Dr. Halperin, if we may start with you. We have scheduled 15 minutes for each of your two presentations. So, thank you.